



News Release

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Meth ingredient tracking system stops more than 13,300 sales in under a year

OLYMPIA — A new statewide tracking system that monitors over-the-counter ingredients used to make methamphetamine blocked more than 13,300 sales in the last nine months.

Three ingredients – pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine – are used as directed to help millions of people treat colds and allergies. A few people buy medications with these ingredients to make the illegal and very dangerous drug commonly called “meth.”

The Washington State Board of Pharmacy oversees the new system — a key tool to stop meth production and sideline meth abuse. The [National Precursor Log Exchange](#) was activated in October; Washington was among the first states to create a statewide tracking system.

From October 15, 2011 through the end of July 2012, the system logged 1,023,929 purchases and blocked the sales of 13,391 meth ingredients – the equivalent of 82 pounds (37,172 grams). The number of blocked sales has grown monthly.

“Our state was once called ‘the poster child for the meth epidemic,’ and we’re now recognized as a success story,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “A decade ago, there were thousands of meth labs and dumps in our state. We can thank community action and legislation, including the new rules that created our tracking system, for turning the tide.”

The tracking system records the buyer’s identification, such as a driver’s license, along with the type and amount of product. Real-time information shows the cashier if the buyer has exceeded the allowed quantity of medication. The system also flags drug purchases made in another state. Information about buying medication over the legal limit is instantly added to a database that’s available to law enforcement. Regular customers still have access to cold, flu, and allergy products without a prescription.

All pharmacies and retail locations that sell these medications must be certified by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and enter transaction data into the tracking system.

[Washington law](#) (RCW 69.43.110) requires pharmacies and other retailers to keep these products where customers don't have access to them, either behind the counter or in a locked case. The retailer must record the name and address of the buyer with a description of the product sold; customers sign a transaction record. Sales are restricted to 3.6 grams per purchase, and no more than nine grams during a 30-day period. The system then tracks each purchase, and information is available to other pharmacies, retailers, and law enforcement.

Information about methamphetamine topics is available online, including info on [meth labs](#), facts about [drug abuse from the National Institutes of Health](#), facts about [meth laws from the state Attorney General's Office](#), and the work of the [Washington State Methamphetamine Initiative](#).

The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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